REGULAR THURSDAY NIGHT

OAKLAND-BERKELEY BRANCH

SOCIALIST PARTY

MEMBERSHIP DISCUSSION MEETING

TOPIC: AGRICULTURAL WORKERS: LABOR'S LOST CHANCE

SPEAKER: Hank Anderson

formerly Research Director, Agricultural Workers' Organizing Committee.

PLACE: 659 56th St, Oakland.

(1½ blocks east of Grove St.)

TIME: 8 PM (be prompt)

Thursday, August 2, 1962.

Available background material

To Build a Union, by Hank Anderson

(Anderson Publishers; 1961; Stockton, California.)

Price $1.00.

"To build a union, one must begin with a vision of what a union is--or what he believes it might become."

"Social institutions, originally, come into being to fill man's need for an orderly meaningful life--a life of constructive relationships with other men--a life in which he can exercise some measure of control over the quality of his existence. But there is apparently something in the nature of our civilization which has led to a withering of these qualities." page 2

"If the labor movement becomes a movement again--if it becomes a a challenge and a corrective to the impoverishment and dehumanization of other social institutions--other institutions must change to meet its challenge." page 3.

① bitter over way firing handled and dishonesty

Introduction: State biasses ^ but almost all conclusions were reached 1-3 years ~~ago~~ before firing.

Will skip recital of horrors of conditions

I A.W.O.C. history

Ⓐ McDonnell talk w/ Meany, Spring, 1958.

Ⓑ Nat'l. Advisory Committee hearings, Feb., 1959.

Ⓒ Other contrib.:

① Jacobs article

② Needling by Randolph & Reuther, et al.

③ Losses of other membership.

④ Needling by other countries in I.C.F.T.U.

Ⓓ Turned over to Jack Livingston, w/ $100,000 per year for 2 years.

① Conference in St. Francis Hotel, March

② Selection of Norman Smith, April, & Stockton as headquarters

Ⓔ Joint campaign –

① Exit UPWA after Imperial ② Exit NAWU, about same time

(F) Termination, June 29, 1961 — 3,000-4,000 members, no locals, no agreements. Spent $500,000.

(G) Remainder of narrative to be continued...

(II) Importance of AWOC

(A) Amelioration of injustice — most have never gone beyond this.

(B) Political importance: democratize the cow counties, alter complexion of Legislature.

(C) Economic importance: induce grower coops, etc.; curb power of DiGiorgio, CPC, etc.

(D) International importance: withdrawal of bracero system

(E) Greatest importance: counteraction to the ossification of organized labor and our whole society — more than ossification, betrayal.

(1) Societies begin by changing in one part of the whole.

(II) Importance of A.W.O.C. (cont.)

(2) Democratization easier when begun at beginning.

(3) Challenge to every other social institution

(a) Political. Self-perpetuating Co. Central Committees

(b) Educational. Non-functional children's & adults' programs

(c) Medical. Choice between money-grubbers & pauper oath.

(d) Recreational, religious, etc.

(4) Once a dynamic force – any force – is loosed in an open society, it spreads. Good money drives out bad as well as reverse.

(5) To work for radical change in farm labor was to work for peace, civil rights, etc.

(III) Quest for the ideal — August – Dec., 1961.
(Partial list)

(A) Area councils.. all ethnic; ages; sexes; etc. Union democracy in action; translations; illiteracy; etc.

(D) ~~(B)~~ Newsletter

(E) ~~(C)~~ Work w/other organizations

(1) C.S.O.

(2) A.F.S.C.

(3) Migrant Ministry, CAMMP

(4) S.P. (convention in Fresno AWOC hall)

(G) ~~(D)~~ Pre-conference planning, Fresno, Oct. 15

(H) ~~(E)~~ conference, Strathmore, Dec. 2. (Norman Thomas)

(I) ~~(F)~~ Delegation to Miami Beach

(J) ~~(G)~~ Statement of principle

(K) ~~(H)~~ "To Build a Union"

(B) ~~(A)~~ Volunteers

(F) Handbills on rights

(L) ~~(K)~~ Civil rights ~~testing~~ by non-violent action.

(C) ~~(L)~~ Santa Cruz strike

(M) Neighborhood organizing

(IV) Labor's lost chance. post convention

(A) a failure both of ends (what a union should be) and means (how to organize people for any purpose)

(B) Area councils abolished

(C) Volunteers abolished

(D) Newsletter abolished

(E) Non-violent direct action repudiated

(F) Contacts with other organizations dropped. "Dual unionism"

(G) Organizing abandoned

(H) Get out the vote for Brown, Cobey, Burns, Hagen, Sisk, McFall, et al.

(I) Everything absolutely controlled from Meany's & ~~Scully's~~ offices.

(J) The future: Teamsters or nothing

(K) Failure before "voluntary period" understandable & forgivable
afterwards – understandable, mayhap., but not forgivable –

(L) Labor incapable of organizing the unorganized the right way – or at all. Doesn't want to alter the power alignments inside and outside the "movement" ~~a failure both of me~~

(M) Tragedy

1. Personal
2. Farm workers
3. Labor – will become a totally spoon-fed arm of "controlled inflation" economy.
4. Whole society & civilization.

A ~~flabby~~ culture which is flabby physically, intellectually, and morally will give way, always, to one which has convictions & some reason for being.